

Foster Care**Policy No. CT- 840.05**

Effective date: June 26, 2018

No. of pages: 3

Policy

Foster children shall be certified eligible for WIC Program benefits according to age, residency, income, nutritional risk requirements and physical presence. Children left in the care of a family member or friend are not considered foster children unless DFACS is involved.

The LA must process all foster care referrals provided to them by the Clearinghouse staff from Gateway foster care referrals. Infants and children placed by DFACS with a relative, close family friend or others who have a long-standing relationship with the infant/child may be screened utilizing thirty-day procedures if the DFACS placement letter is not available.

A foster child shall be considered a one-person household. Money received from any outside source for the care of the child, such as Social Security payments shall be considered as income. If a relative does not receive any money for the care of the child, the child's income will be zero.

Verification is not required at subsequent certifications if the child remains in the same foster home.

Purpose

To ensure there are no barriers to the issuance of vouchers for infant and children participants who are placed in foster care. To ensure individuals at nutritional risk receive program benefits.

Procedures

- I. Obtain verification of placement by the clearinghouse staff at initial certification.
- II. Accept written or verbal verification.
- III. Document the DFACS contact name and phone number in the foster child's file.
- IV. Place the signed documentation in the participant's WIC record or scan into the front-end system or Georgia Gateway system.
- V. Issue the foster child a WIC ID Card, which is separate from the foster family.
- VI. Issue a separate WIC ID Card for multiple foster children, including siblings, residing in the same foster home.
- VII. Replace an infant/child's vouchers, as necessary, when the previously issued vouchers are not given/transferred over to the new caregiver, using the guidelines below:
 - A. Report the unused vouchers issued to the first caregiver on the Lost, Stolen, and Destroyed voucher report.
 - B. Submit a copy of the report to DXC Technology and the state WIC office.
 - C. Document on the new voucher receipt "Change in Custody" when issuing a replacement set of vouchers to the new caregiver.
 - D. Provide the new caregiver a new WIC ID card.

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VIII. Issue vouchers in one month increments to the foster parent if placement is changed and the new foster parent does not have the placement letter.

Change in Foster Homes

- I. Follow the below procedures when a participant is removed from a foster home and is reunited with his/her parent(s):
 - A. Request the parent present the child at the WIC appointment or provide written documentation from DFACS or former guardian.
 - B. Obtain and document the contact information of the staff providing the verbal verification, when applicable.
 - C. Always Check Georgia WIC Information System (GWIS) before issuing vouchers.
 - D. Complete the Caregivers Statement of Change form.
 - E. If the child was issued benefits for the current month while in foster care:
 1. Schedule an appointment for the following month.
 2. Reassess income, unless there is 90 days or less before the expiration of the certification period.
 3. Require the caregiver to provide acceptable written documentation of the household income or eligibility in a Gateway program at the next appointment, and issued one month of benefits.
 - F. If the child's certification has expired, determine if the individual is income eligible according to the [Income Policy](#).
- II. Follow the below procedures if the foster child is later adopted:
 - A. Accept current Medicaid verification as income even if it continues to list the foster child's name rather than the adoptive name.
 - B. Use Medicaid eligibility as income for the other household members per the Adjunctive Eligibility policy if the adopted individual is an infant or pregnant woman.
 - C. Do not reassess income if the child has an active certification period.
 - D. Process the certification as an in-state transfer and issue benefits.
 - E. Schedule an appointment for the following month.
 - F. Add the child to the adoptive family's record and issue benefits, if the family is currently participating in the WIC program.
 - G. Create a record and issue a WIC ID Card for the adoptive family, if the family is not participating in the WIC Program.
 - H. Allow the adoptive family to redeem the remaining benefits, if the child was previously issued benefits for the current month.

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Authority

7 CFR §246.12 (r)(1)—Food Delivery Systems
O.C.G.A. § 29-2-22 (a)(2)

Definitions/Supporting Information

Caregiver: The parent or legal guardian of an infant or child. A caregiver may also be an individual who is neither a biological or step parent, nor a legal guardian, who provides financial support and care of an infant or child that resides in his/her/their home.

Foster Parent: Volunteers who provide temporary care to children who have been placed in the temporary, legal custody of the local Department of Family and Children Services. Foster parents work as a part of a team to assure that a child's physical, emotional, medical and psychological needs are met while they are in foster care.

Parent: The biological, adoptive, or stepparent of an infant or child.

Foster Child: – any child placed through the Georgia Department of Family and Children Services (DFACS). A child returning to his/her parent shall not be considered a foster child.

DFACS placements include:

- a. Foster family home or group home that has been either trained and verified by DFACS.
- b. Residential group care facility that has been licensed by DFACS; or a facility under the authority of another state agency.
- c. Infant or child placed with a relative, close family friend or others who have a long-standing relationship with the infant/child.